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the tour proper, however, we took the train to Winnipeg, and returned to Emerson the next day. The capital appeared to be a busy little place, very much overrated, and with a limited future before it. On returning to Emerson we held a consultation with the postmaster, the result of which was that we decided to make Brandon our objective point, it being then the northwestern terminus of the Canadian Pacific railroad. We were also advised to ride through the Rock Lake district, which, we were informed, had the best scenery in the province. Our course, therefore, was directly northwest. We left the Gateway House on Sunday morning, amidst the mingled jeers and cheers of an interested group of spectators, and on arriving at the bridge over the Red river we found that the structure had broken down, and that all vehicular traffic was suspended. As a pleasant preliminary, therefore, we had to shoulder our bicycles and carry them over a narrow, quivering plank, placed across a yawning gap in the bridge,—a sort of Blondin-like performance to which neither of us was very partial. On the opposite side we mounted, and began our tour. The day was a regular August scorchers, and the mosquitos assembled in countless hosts to bid us adieu. Leaving Emerson, we passed through the little village of West Lynne, where the Hudson Bay Company has a fine store-house. Our appearance excited considerable attention, and, I regret to say, we were made the subjects of much uncomplimentary criticism. We consoled ourselves with the reflection that great explorers have been so treated from time immemorial; and, riding rapidly through the village, we struck out directly west for the open prairie. The riding was much easier than we had anticipated, there being a well-beaten trail, in which our wheels ran smoothly. The first two hours' ride was delightful, and then we reached the Mennonite settlement, or "Ten-mile village," as it is locally termed. When about half a mile from the settlement, we were observed by some of the Mennonites, who spread the news, so that, when we arrived in the village, the entire population was waiting to receive us. These Russian-German peasants are a curious people. They make the best of settlers, being hard-working and thrifty. They are also wonderfully kind-hearted and hospitable. We found the drinking-water at the Mennonite village so strongly alkaline as to be absolutely unsafe to use, and we suffered severely for drinking it. Half an hour's ride brought us to our first difficulty,—a long slough, directly across the trail. On either side of the roadway, stretching as far as we could see, was a weary waste of prairie-grass over three feet high, which rendered it impossible to push the machines through. The slough was only about twenty yards wide, but as to the depth of the water and nature of the mud at the bottom we were in complete ignorance. We therefore made an agreement that, from that point to the remainder of the tour, should we encounter any similar obstacles, we would by turns "peel," and carry the machines and the other man over the sloughs of despond. We tossed up to decide who should be the first victim. I lost. There appeared to

OVER MANITOBA ON A WHEEL.

MANITOBA may, to the average reader, seem a curious sort of place to choose for a bicycle tour; but the novelty of the idea commended itself to myself and a young English friend last fall, and we determined to spend two weeks in exploring part of that much-talked-of region. Leaving Chicago August 8, we took the cars for Emerson, the first place over the American border, which we reached on the 10th of the month. We were immediately greeted by millions of the most penetrating mosquitos I ever experienced. We took rooms at the Gateway House, where we excited considerable attention. The idea of bicycling over the trails appeared to be supremely ridiculous to the Manitoban mind. We learned that Winnipeg, the capital of the province, was only sixty miles north of Emerson, and we therefore determined to strike out in a westerly direction. Before beginning

be no one within a hundred miles of us, and in a few seconds I was in a state fit to "swim the cold ocean." Upon cautiously wading in, I discovered that the water was not more than three feet deep, but the bottom was shockingly muddy. I carried my companion, and he carried my clothes. I then had the delightful felicity of transferring the bicycles across. The whole proceeding occupied about half an hour, and by the time I was dry it was rapidly growing dark and the mosquitos were coming out. We were in no hurry to make any given point, but, in view of the fact that there was not a house in sight, we put on a good spurt.

Bicycling is a wonderfully exhilarating sport, and a spin over a trail almost as level as a billiard-table is calculated to put any one in a good humor. We had not, however, gone more than a couple of miles before we almost ran into another slough. This, however, was barely ten yards across, and, as it was not my turn to do the carrying, I viewed the situation with equanimity. The Britisher undressed, and I climbed his shoulders, holding his clothes in my arms. He took three strides into the water, and was up to his neck in a hole. I, of course, fell off his shoulders, and was floundering in the water like an awkward grampus. The accident was very unfortunate, as all our clothes were completely saturated; however, we had to make the best of it, and, after the bicycles had been carried over, we were soon in the saddle again, and made a comical appearance in our dripping suits. An hour's good riding brought us to a collection of wooden houses, which we learned constituted Stodderville; and here we put up for the night. Thus far the riding had been remarkably smooth, the trail being well padded and level. We were much surprised at the total absence of timber, as, with the exception of the Dakota woods, we had not seen any trees to speak of, though we had had a general impression that Manitoba was a well-wooded country.

The next day was Monday, and we resumed our journey after breakfast. During the night, however, there had been a heavy shower, and the trail was consequently in a horrible condition. For stickiness Manitoban mud is simply phenomenal. The spokes of our wheels became covered, and we could only drive them with difficulty. We were constantly compelled to dismount and clean the mud off, in addition to which inconvenience the ground became oily and greasy to such an extent that our progress was slow and laborious. As the sun rose the trail became dry, and we were able to ride with ease again. Mountain City was the next point reached, but before arriving there we rode through a "mosquito swamp." The air was simply choked with these pests, and the pain of their bites was intolerable. The farmers assured us that in the evening no animal would go through the swamp. We passed rapidly through Mountain City, which is merely a collection of small frame-houses, and about a mile from the town came to a point where two trails met. Of course we took the wrong one, and had followed it for an hour before a farmer told us we were riding into "America." We therefore returned,

and had a delightful three-mile spin over the prairie, which sloped at an angle sufficient to allow the wheels to run with very little exertion. Passing Darlingford, and various small log and frame houses, an hour's run brought us to the Great Pembina crossing, down which ran a rocky trail at an angle of about forty-five degrees. We were compelled to walk for a mile and a half down hill, and then push the machines uphill for the same distance. On emerging from the valley, however, we found the same smooth prairie, but, as we were both tired, we determined to spend the night at the next house we came to; and, upon rounding a little clump of dry poplar trees we were delighted to find the desired haven of rest. Our arrival created the usual amusement and surprise; but we were nevertheless hospitably entertained, and enjoyed the visit, notwithstanding the fact that we had to sleep in the hayloft over the barn, where we were closely inspected by swarms of rats and other animals.

The next morning we reached Pilot Mound, so called from a peculiar shaped hill which can be seen at a considerable distance over the prairie, and which was used as a landmark by the early settlers going West. The town consisted of an inn, a saw-mill, a post-office, and a well of delicious drinking-water. Passing Marringhurst and Glenore, where the post-offices of the district are situated, we came to the "Little farm," owned by three brothers of that name. We were invited to spend the remainder of the evening with them, which we did, and obtained some interesting information about the country. They were living in the hope that the railroad would pass near their farm, and so enable them to sell out at a profit, and leave. They spoke of the winters as terrible in their severity, and cruelly hard upon people who had no money to buy clothing warm enough to withstand the arctic cold. Their opinion was that if there were sufficient railroads, and the mosquitoes and cold weather were driven away, Manitoba would be rather a decent place to settle in, but under the conditions then existing, life was not worth living.

Early the following morning we continued our tour, and an hour's ride brought us to a store kept by a man named Smith. It was the roughest place I ever saw, and everything sold was of the poorest quality. Smith was such a dirty-looking ruffian that we declined his offer to cook some pork for us, and he therefore directed us to take a side trail at the bottom of a valley, which, he said, led to the house of an Englishman. This we willingly did, and we came to a snug-looking log-house, almost surrounded by hazel-bushes. The house was built at the foot of a hill, which effectually shielded it from the heavy winds and blizzards. We noticed a tall, well-built, and handsome man feeding a calf fastened to a fallen log. No sooner, however, did we get within sight, before my companion let his machine fall to the ground with a crash, and, rushing towards the astonished farmer, yelled in an excited manner, "Why, Williams, how in Heaven's name did you come here?" Explanations followed, and I learned that my friend and the farmer had been acquaintances in "days gone by," and had lost

sight of each other until the meeting in Manitoba under such curious circumstances. I am afraid that the calf had to be content with half rations that day. Williams introduced us to his wife, a beautiful English girl, and to his little daughter May, one of the prettiest of children, with whom we both immediately fell in love. I regret to say, however, that my advances were repulsed, and that she gave all her kisses and embraces to her British friend. It was a delightful treat to meet the Williams family in that out of the way quarter of the globe, and we stayed there three days.

We found that Williams's farm was in the Rock Lake district, the lake itself being only two miles away, and we therefore determined to push on to Brandon, instead of going to the lake, which did not present any very attractive features, either in the way of scenery or society. Brandon lies about fifty miles northwest of Rock Lake, and, bidding good-by to the Williams' family, we took the trail again. The riding continued uniformly smooth, and we made good time over the rolling prairie. Passing the Stark farm and other minor points, we reached Milford, a little town on the Souris river, at the bottom of a deep ravine, and the approach is by a narrow wagon-road winding round a picturesque cliff. The city would form a good study for an artist. The muddy Souris rolls sullenly through it, and at the ford there stands a quaint old flour mill, from which the place derives its name. We did not stay long at Milford. The place was all aglow with excitement over the problematical discovery of coal in the Souris coal-fields, and the completion of the Canadian Pacific railroad to Brandon. We crossed the river in a rickety old ferryboat. On reaching the opposite bank we climbed a steep hill, and were delighted to find

a perfect prairie-table, stretching away as far as eye could see. The whistle of the locomotives at Brandon boomed on the ear with a pleasantly familiar sound, and three hours' moderate riding brought us to the outskirts of our destination. The last two hours of our ride were by moonlight, and strangely weird. Wolves flitted across the trail at intervals, and the howl of the foxes and coyotes came over the prairie with a dismal cadence. We made a two days' stay at Brandon. The town was wonderfully busy, but the same idea impressed us as in other cities in Manitoba,—that the excitement was sporadic and unhealthy. We decided to retrace our steps in preference to taking the cars to Winnipeg. The return run was without special incident, beyond a second delightful visit to the Williams's farm, and the usual mosquito fights. We were remarkably fortunate with the sloughs, happening to find a teamster who carried us over at each crossing. On passing through the villages and Mennonite settlements we were warmly greeted by the natives, who remembered our first visit, and turned out in great numbers to witness our phenomenal methods of locomotion. We reached Emerson in three days after leaving Brandon. Our prairie tour thus occupied exactly two weeks, and was remarkably pleasant, owing to the extraordinarily smooth nature of the trails and the absence of hills. Had it not been for the sloughs and mosquitos the trip would have been one of unalloyed pleasure. The total distance we traveled on wheels was about four hundred miles. At the same time, I should hardly recommend any one to choose Manitoba as a place to go for a bicycle tour. The absence of interesting scenery, and the general monotony of the country, make it unattractive.

Harry M. Lee.

